

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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R 101424Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2154

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2941

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJ: CONCERNS OF SARG PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR RE US

MIDDLE EAST POLICY

1. IN MY DECEMBER 9 CALL ON HIM, PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL COUNSELOR DR. ADIB DAOUDI EXPOUNDED AT LENGTH ON HOW ASAD HAD CONSISTENTLY TRIED BE HELPFUL TO SECRETARY'S PEACE INITIATIVES. FOR ITS PART US MUST REALIZE THAT WHILE ASAD ENJOYS BROAD POPULARITY IN SYRIA HE MUST NEVERTHELESS DEAL WITH GROWING IMPATIENCE OF CERTAIN SYRIAN ELEMENTS WITH SARG'S COOPERATION WITH US PEACE INITIATIVES.

2. DAOUDI SAID THAT MANY SYRIANS WERE COMPLAINING THAT THE SIX MONTHS SINCE DISENGAGEMENT HAD NOT BENEFITTED SYRIA. I ASKED HOW HE RECONCILED THIS COMPLAINT WITH SELF-CONGRATULATORY NOTE STRUCK BY SYRIANS OVER SARG'S LEADERSHIP IN ARAB FORUMS, FROM TIME OF CAIRO COMMUNIQUE LAST SEPTEMBER THROUGH RABAT SUMMIT AND PLO DEBATE AT UNGA. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT SYRIA HAD EXPLOITED THE PERIOD OF RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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LATIVE CALM USHERED IN MY LAST MAY'S CEASEFIRE AND DISENGAGE-

MENT AGREEMENT FOR WHAT SARG AT LEAST VIEWED AS ITS OWN POLITICAL BENEFIT AND THE BENEFIT OF ARAB UNITY IN GENERAL. DAOUDI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "SYRIA HAD NOT BEEN INACTIVE." HE RETURNED, HOWEVER, TO HIS THEME THAT SYRIA NEEDED SOMETHING BEYOND VERBAL REASSURANCES THAT THE USG HAD NOT SLACKENED ITS EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND A JUST PEACE. I SAID THAT THE CURRENT ALLON VISIT TO WASHINGTON WAS IN ITSELF EVIDENCE THAT WE HAD NOT DONE SO.

3. DAOUDI MADE A POINT OF REMARKING THAT HE DISAGREED WITH OBSERVERS WHO CLAIMED THAT RETRACTIONS OF RECENT SERIES OF STATEMENTS BY SENIOR USG SPOKESMEN WERE ONLY THE NATURAL RESULT OF "TRIAL BALLOONS" LAUNCHED TO PREPARE US PUBLIC OPINION FOR, INTER ALIA, A NEW VIEW OF THE PLO. HE SAW RETRACTIONS SIMPLY AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY STRENGTH OF THE ISRAELI LOBBY IN WASHINGTON.

4. COMMENT: DAOUDI WAS APPOINTED TO HIS PRESENT POSITION LAST SUMMER. HE IS AN URBANE THIRTY YEAR VETERAN OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WHO STARTED HIS CAREER WHILE STILL A STUDENT IN PARIS IN 1943. HE DELIVERED HIS ALLEGATIONS OF US "INACTION" IN LOW KEY BUT WITH EVIDENT CONCERN. THIS CONCERN IS WIDELY ECHOED THROUGHOUT DAMASCUS OFFICIAL CIRCLES.
MURPHY

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